RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

November, 1999

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

HARBOR VIEW HOLIDAY PARTY

Time is running out! We need your donations of men's or ladies socks or handkerchiefs, and small items of lotions or unbreakable figurines. Also sign up to bake homemade dietietic cookies or cakes.

RNA will hold is annual holiday party for the residents of the Harbor View Health Care Facility on **Friday, November 19th at 1:30 PM.** It is an afternoon of fun, music, food and drink - with gifts for all the residents given out by Santa Claus and his helpers.

RNA will prepare these gift packages from the membership donations of the above requested items and other small unbreakable items, such as picture frames or bric-a-brac. We are also looking for contributions of small stuffed animals or rag dolls.

We need volunteers to serve, bake or donate dietetic delicacies. Baked goods should be brought to the Facility located at the corner of Franklin and Ogden on the day of the party. If you are baking, use disposable pans or trays.

As usual, we will have live musical entertainment for the residents. However, the most appreciative gift is for people to volunteer themselves to spend time and talk to these marvelous residents. It does wonders to just see their eyes light up when someone spends some quality time with them. They also love to have young children visit and talk to them. Therefore, we need you to come and participate in this marvelous event. You will be rewarded as you see the smiles on their faces.

For more information, call **Jack at 653-6916** or speak to Maria, Jack or Valerie at the November meeting. This is RNA's way of thanking these seniors for allowing us to use their home for our monthly meetings.

ANNUAL FOOD & TOY DRIVE

RNA is looking for contributions of dry and canned food products and new or used toys for its Annual Holiday Drive. All proceeds are donated to the **Salvation Army** to distribute to less fortunate families during the holidays.

Bring the food and toys to the November and December meetings. Used toys must be in good working order.

You can also make a monetary donation. You can drop off your contributions during the week or receive more information by calling **Maria at 659-2245.**

MURDER ON MOUNTAIN ROAD

The headline sounds like one of those ever popular detective mysteries that people cannot read enough of. Unfortunately, it describes the horrifyingly real and untimely death of a local resident who happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. A local paper reported that **Celso Roldan**, age 59, of Hoboken was beaten to death with his head bashed in. He was found on our own Mountain Road around 5 AM on Friday morning, the 22nd of November.

Brutal senseless violence has happened once again in our community - one time too often. This is the third incident that has occurred on Mountain Road in the last three years. In September, 1997, a local resident and community gardener was beaten, gagged and left for dead. Fortunately he survived and the culprits were apprehended. Then in February, 1998, less than six months later, another man was found stabbed to death in a ridiculous lover's quarrel. The culprit was also apprehended in that crime.

Unfortunately, crime - and violent crime in particular - is part of our urban existence. We must watch where we walk and when we walk and how we walk through our community because certain individuals are always looking for new "prey". The additional problem that this incident highlights is that it might have been prevented if Mountain Road had been open for public use: vehicular and pedestrian traffic and also regular police patrols. Mountain Road has been closed since 1983 and under renovation by the City since June of 1998. In December of that year, a large underground cavern was discovered under a portion of the roadway. All construction was stopped until the City engineers could decide how to support the roadway over this area.

It took ten months for new plans for a retaining wall to be drawn up and put out for bid to the original contractor, Green Construction. In those ten months, the Road has been allowed to deteriorate back to its original use as a location for all sorts of illegal activities - dumping, drugs, drinking, fighting, grafitti - you name it.

On Tuesday, November 26th, a group of irate community residents met with City officials at City Hall to demand that immediate action be taken to remedy this situation. The police, represented by **Captain Wolleon** and **Sgt. Ruby** of the North District, promised late night directed and walking patrols on the Road. **Gerald Nissen**, Director of Engineering,

MOUNTAIN ROAD (continued from first page)

promised to contact Green Construction and demand that they work around the problem area and finish all the other existing work. He would also contact PSEG to install additional lighting along certain darkened areas on the Road.

Councilmembers DeGise, Gaughan and Bettinger coordinated efforts and promised to have the Dept. of Public Works install a fence and signage to close the Road to all people. At the very least the signs will alert pedestrians and hopefully dissuade then from using the Road until it is officially reopened. The Council members also promised to expedite the approval of the new contract for the retaining wall. Nissen also explained that once the contract was approved, work could resume immediately and continue through the winter.

A leafletting campaign was organized to alert everyone in the local neighborhoods about this incident with a suggestion that people call the **Jersey Journal (217-2500)** and the **Mayor's office (547-5200)** to express their anger, fear and outrage about this situation.

MEETING MINUTES: October 12, 1999

The meeting was called to order at 7:25 PM by the Chair.

Neighborhood Clean-up:

Vice-Chair Kevin Mahony outlined the plans for RNA's annual fall clean-up to take place on Saturday, October 16th between the hours of 8 AM to noon. The clean-up would include the two local parks and Mountain Road. The members approved $200.00 for clean-up expenses.

[See the article on page 3 for the results of this event.]

Neighborhood Improvement District:

Managers Laura Petersen and Susan Benavides gave a brief presentation of their recent activities in our neighborhood. They discussed inspecting problems at the following properties: 419 Palisade Avenue, 360-362A Palisade Avenue, 436-438 Palisade Avenue and 224 Ogden Avenue. They also described their efforts to maintain empty lots, clean Mountain Road, control rodent problems and pigeon feeding at the corner of Ogden and Franklin.

RNA Holiday Activities:

Jack Rea requested donations, contributions and volunteers for the upcoming Holiday Party given for the senior residents of the Harbor View scheduled for **Friday, November 19th**. (More information about this event is on the front page of the newsletter.)

Maria Tuzzo announced RNA's **Annual Food and Toy Drive**. All items will be donated to the local Salvation Army for distribution. (More information about this event is on the front page of the newsletter.)

Membership Discussion:

RNA decided not to invite any guests to this meeting and instead have an open discussion among its members about problems, concerns or suggestions for our community. The following topics were discussed:

a) **Palisade Avenue Redevelopment**: Certain individuals have begun to spread false and unsubstantiated rumors that the City has a hidden agenda in its proposed plan: to blight the area in order to take control of the properties and build "high rises and McDonald's." As previously announced by Robert Cotter, Director of City Planning, at the September meeting, the process of redevelopment involves an initial survey to evaluate the area. Then the City participates in an open and public process whereby the residents and owners decide what is best for their own community.

There appears to be a renewed interest in our community with the City's renovation of the two mountain roads, the future alignment of the Light Rail System below the cliff, and an increasing lack of housing in Hoboken. As educated and prepared residents, we can capitalize on this interest and still control the destiny our own community. Mr. Cotter stressed that we should not be afraid of change - we should manage it.

b) **Surveillance Cameras**: A suggestion was made that we request the City to install these cameras to monitor certain problem areas in our neighborhood: Franklin and Palisade, Webster and Franklin, Griffith and Webster. It was explained that the City was first testing the efficiency of this system in the MLK redevelopment area.

c) **Riverview-Fisk Park**: The City has finally committed itself to completing the renovation of the eastern slope of the Park from Ogden Avenue to the Palisade cliff. Projects could include a new lower walkway along the cliff, renovation of the gazebo, park benches and tree plantings. A suggestion was made that interested parties should participate in the Planning and Redevelopment Committee to begin discussions about this long-awaited project.

d) **New Construction**: RNA announced that it would help anyone experiencing problems with new construction or renovations adjacent to their properties. RNA has been fairly successful in assisting property owners at variance and planning board meetings.

The meeting ended at 9:30 PM.

Maria Tuzzo, Secretary

HOLIDAY BAZAAR

The **Harbor View Health Care Facility**, located at the corner of Ogden Avenue and Franklin Street, will be holding a Holiday Bazaar on **Sunday, December 12, 1999** from **10 AM to 4 PM**. We are seeking vendors and crafters to participate. Tables are $20.00. Space is limited.

If interested, please call, **Aimee Montgomery** at **(201) 963-1800** to reserve your space.

FALL NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN-UP A BIG SUCCESS

On Saturday, October 16th, approximately thirty volunteers turned out to participate in the Fall Clean Up of our Community. This year's projects included Riverview-Fisk Park, the dead-end of Griffith Street, the Riverview Community Garden and Mountain Road.

Several volunteers started out with a litter sweep of the Park. As others arrived, the shrubs and trees located in the Center Gardens of Riverview-Fisk Park were trimmed and the area was weeded. The Riverview Community Garden opened its gates and several fall projects were initiated by its members including the planting of bulbs.

Other volunteers went to work on the dead-end of Griffith Street, east of Ogden Avenue. A year's overgrowth of weeds and an accumulation of trash was removed from this area. Later in the day, several volunteers also focused on the removal of weeds and trash from Mountain Road.

As has been our practice in the past, we had also arranged for the placement of two City owned roll-off dumpsters. The dumpsters were placed at Hobson Street in the North end of our community and on Cuneo Place for our neighbors in the South end. We apologize for the confusion for the placement of the dumpster on Cuneo Place. We had intended to place the dumpster at Franklin Street, but there was a problem with the timing of the delivery.

Thanks to our neighbors **Allison, Beth, Bongo, Carol, Chris, Cindy Z., Doris, Gail, Gerry, Gina, Hank, John, Jonathan, Kathy, Kevin, Kirk, Len, Lisa, Matthew, Mike, Patrick, Randy, Rick, Sandy, Stephanie and Vito**; all of whom gave up a part of their day for this project (and anyone else we inadvertently did not mention).

As in the past, we also had the support of our local NID Managers **Laura Petersen** and **Susan Benavides**. In addition to spending their day with us, Laura and Susan also brought along their colleagues: **Charles Rockford** and **Richard Young** from the North District. We greatly appreciate the support NID has continued to give us with these projects.

Special Thanks is also extended to **Janet Manzo** at the Jersey City Incinerator Authority for scheduling the use of the dumpsters. We would also like to thank **Matthew Hogan** at the Department of Public Works for arranging the use of City tools and for providing other vital supplies for this project. And Finally, an extra special thanks to **Beth and Dan Derrico** for opening their home and organizing lunch for the volunteers that afternoon.

[A display of photographs depicting the clean-up is presented on pages 4-5.]

Kevin Mahony

☞ RECYCLE YOUR GARBAGE AND DISPOSABLES - IT'S THE LAW!

COMMUNITY UPDATES:

OCTOBER 18: Heights Coalition of Neighborhood and Block Associations held their monthly meeting on Monday, October 18th with guest speaker **Arnold Bettinger, Councilman of Ward C**. Mr Bettinger discussed certain solutions to the chronic problems of traffic and parking in our City, including:

a) the following changes the City Council was contemplating for the permit parking ordinance, such as a $250.00 annual fee for out-of-town commuters; and allowing the permit holder to park anywhere in the City - not just in their residential zone;

b) the development of a park and ride area along Route 440;

c) authorizing the Parking Authority to handle more traffic problems - which would free the police to concentrate on criminal problems; and

d) **State Senator Bernard Kenny** is going to propose legislation to regulate the jitney vans, including: limiting the number of vans on designated routes, specific schedules of operation and designated overnight parking.

The Councilman also discussed the City's current financial crisis. He said he favored the creation of a municipal payroll tax as an annual source of revenue. He also discussed the renovation of Journal Square, including:

1) a proposal to develop the east side of the Square (where his family had a successful business for many years) by a private investor; and

2) the need to complete the Loews Theatre renovation and restore it to a movie showplace.

Bettinger also announced that the City Council was in the process of passing an ordinance to defeat the proposal to establish a garbage transfer station in Greenville.

Maria Tuzzo

OCTOBER 20: Heights Hope Neighborhood Association held its monthly meeting in the auditorium at P.S. #28 on Hancock Avenue. This new civic group is organizing the community approximately located between Cambridge Avenue to the west, Paterson Plank Road to the north, Bower Street on the south and Palisade Avenue to the east. The membership approved zoned residential permit parking for their area.

They also opened up nominations for their first election of executive officers.

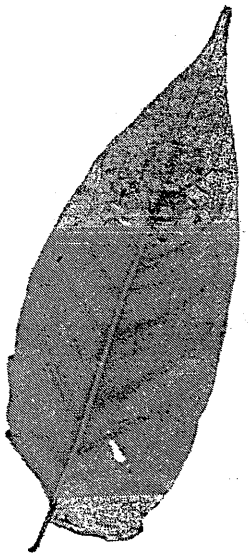
OCTOBER 21: The Ward C Community Meeting, chaired by **Councilman Bettinger** was held in Eleni's Coffee Shop on Newark Avenue. **County Executive Robert Janisewski**, running for re-election on November 2nd, spoke about the accomplishments during his administration, including the 19% growth in employment, the drop of unemployment

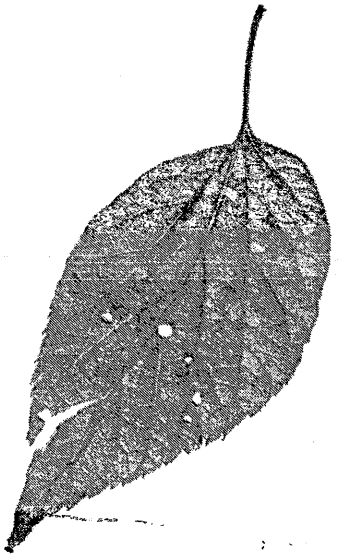
Scenes fom October 16, 1999 Fall Clean Up

Participants at work and rest during RNA's sucessful Fall Clean Up. As nieghbors, we joined together to remove litter from both Riverview-Fiske Park and Janet Moore Park. The hedges were trimmed and the center gardens of Riverview-Fiske Park were weeded. Volunteers also removed litter and excessive weeds on Mountain Road and the dead end of Griffith Street. The Riverview Community Garden opened its gates for the day and several Fall projects were initiated by its members and volunteers.

Photos by Dan D'Errico

NAVY





from 14% to 7%, a 50% reduction of the county welfare rolls and a significant decrease in criminal activity.

Police Captain Wolleon of the North District addressed the numerous noise complaints concerning a new restaurant called La Bashuata, located at 646 Newark Avenue made by local residents living behind it on Hoboken Avenue. **Rachel Riccio of the Jersey City ABC** also promised to look into this problem. Also present was **Captain Tony Daulto** of NTF Section of the Jersey City Police Department.

Maureen Corrado of the NID answered questions about quality of life issues, including the chronic problem of maintenance along New York Avenue.

Maria Tuzzo

OCTOBER 21: **Sgt. Anthony Park Association** held its monthly meeting in Dickinson High School. **Dan Connell of Christ Hospital** and **Joan Quigley of the Franciscan Hospital System** (including Saint Mary and Saint Francis Hospitals) announced the merger of their two facilities. The reason for this "partnership" is that the individual hospitals are under great financial pressure because of the cut in charity care reimbursements under the new Medicaid regulations. A new corporate entity will be responsible for the daily operations of the three facilities - with a 50% ownership by each of the two systems. Although these two representatives promised that each facility would continue to provide both emergency room and acute care, it seems probable that there will be a certain amount of "down-sizing" - ie., reduction in bed capacity and staffing (nursing and physicians).

As part of its effort to become more financially viable, Christ Hospital is looking to sell some of its properties on Palisade Avenue. Saint Francis will reduce its acute care by at least 30 beds but double its rehabilitation capacity from 30 to 60 beds.

In response to a question, it was revealed that this new corporate entity would be taken over by the **Sisters of Bon Sacore** [sic], a national health care company headquartered in Maryland.

As for Christ Hospital's Family Care Center located in our community at Palisade Avenue and Wood Place, Mr. Connell promised that the Center will not be affected by this merger and that there will not be any transfer of patients from Saint Mary's to this facility.

The next guest speaker, **Steve Lipski**, discussed his plans to open a charter school in Jersey City. He advocated the use of charter schools to reform the public school system. He also opposed the use of vouchers which would weaken public schools through privatization. His project would be located on St. Pauls Avenue in a series of modular structures.

JOIN RNA

The annual membership dues of **$7.00** enables a local resident to vote on important issues in our community and receive our monthly newsletter. **Our boundaries are Ogden and Palisade Avenues from Congress Street to Cuneo Place.**

REGULATION OF JITNEY VANS

It appears that two of our local legislators - **U. S. Congressman Robert Menendez** (13th District) and **State Senator Bernard F. Kenny, Jr.** (33rd District) - are finally responding to our community's request to regulate the small commercial vans, commonly known as "jitneys", that operate on our streets.

Congressman Menendez has introduced the Safe and Efficient Passenger van Act (House Resolution 2775) which would "allow States to regulate operations of these commercial vans to ensure that van operations are safe for passengers and the public; only load and unload at safe locations; do not interfere with the flow of traffic or significantly worsen road congestions; and are limited to routes approved by the States. In addition, my bill allows the States to limit the number of commercial vans operating on any route and to inspect such vans."

In turn, Senator Kenny has requested that the Office of Legislative Services "research the possibility of drafting legislation which will change the statutes allowing the State of New Jersey to limit the number of commercial vans operating along routes throughout the state."

HUDSON WATERFRONT UPDATE

RNA needs to re-establish its commitment to defend the need for public open space along the Hudson River Waterfront. It can do this by supporting the civic groups that tirelessly do "battle" with the corporate interests that would overdevelop this precious resource.

The **Coalition for A Better Waterfront** (CBW) has been successful in defeating two massive development schemes for Hoboken's southern waterfront in public referendums in 1990 and 1992. Currently it is organizing against a proposal to build a hockey arena atop the historic Erie Lackawana Terminal. Although Governor Whitman has let it be known that she would prefer to have the two sports teams - hockey and basketball - in one location, a final decision has not been made and the Devils owner John McMullen is still pushing this bizarre plan. At the November meeting, a motion will be made to make a monetary contribution to support the CBW's work.

Another motion will be made to support the efforts of the **Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy,** who along with the **New York/New Jersey Baykeeper, the CBW, the Friends of the Weehawken Waterfront, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the American Littoral Society** are opposing a federal lawsuit brought by the National Association of Homebuilders (NAH) and the New Jersey Builders Association (NJBA) to dismantle the Waterfront Walkway. This past August, the judge ruled in favor of the Conservancy and declared that the waterfront is considered public trust land and dismissed the claim that the Walkway was a "taking" of private property. However, the NAH and NJBA have filed an appeal to overturn that decision.

Finally, RNA will make a third motion to support the efforts of the **Friends of the Weehawken Waterfront** who are opposing a proposal by Roseland Properties, for a 3.9 million square feet waterfront development that is currently before the municipal planning board.

Bulletin board

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

1) Neighborhood Improvement District: To leave a message on voice mail, call 547-4974 and

a) **Ext. 8010 for North-6 Mgr. Susan Benavides** (Ogden and Palisade Avenues from Cuneo Place to Griffith Street)

b) **Ext. 8021 for North-7 Mgr. Laura Petersen** (Ogden and Palisade Avenues from Griffith to Congress Streets.) .

2) PSEG LIGHTING: To report a non-functioning light in the Park or on any of our streets, call **PSEG** at **330-6572** and leave a message with the exact location and number of the street pole.

3) PARKING AUTHORITY: To report parking complaints call **653-6969**, and press #9. This number is good till 12 midnight. If there is an emergency, Mr. Carmine Venezia, the PA Director can be reached through his beeper **517-3367**, till midnight during the weekdays and till 5 pm on Saturdays.

From Valerie's Kitchen:

Dinner in a Pumpkin

INGREDIENTS:

1 small to medium pumpkin
permanent markers or acrylic paints
2 pounds extra-lean ground beef
1 onion, chopped
2 tbsp. soy sauce
2 tbsp. brown sugar
1 (4 ounce) can sliced mushrooms, drained
1 (10-3/4 ounce) can cream of chicken soup
1-1/2 cups of cooked rice
1 (8 ounce) can water chestnuts, drained/sliced

1) Cut the top off the pumpkin and thoroughly clean out the seeds and pulp. Paint a face on the front of the pumpkin with markers or paint.
2) In a large skillet, brown the meat in oil, and drain off the grease. Add onions and saute until golden.
3) Add soy sauce, brown sugar, mushrooms and soup. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the rice and chestnuts and heat. Spoon the mixture into the cleaned pumpkin shell.
4) If you want to eat the pumpkin as a side dish, bake the stuffed pumpkin at 350 degrees for 1 to 1-1/2 hours, until the pumpkin is tender.

POLICEBEAT

Residents should contact their **Neighborhood Task Force** (NTF) **Police Officers** if they have a problem, a safety concern or knowledge of criminal activity through the North District's Community Service voice mail at **547-5719** or through the front desk at **547-5350**. When leaving a message, include your name, telephone number, street address, the nature of the problem and the date and time of the message. For emergencies, call **547-5477** or **911**.

In addition, anyone with information about illegal drug use and/or drug dealing, should contact the JCPD **Narcotics Unit** at **547-5391** or beeper at **502-9131**. All calls will be strictly confidential.

On the following page, RNA has reprinted a page from the 1999 edition of the Heights Pride Booklet, entitled **Suspicious Activity / Crime Report**. Please use it to write down all information about any illegal activity that you witness in our neighborhood. The information will be helpful when you make the report to the police, in their investigation and if necessary, apprehension of a suspect.

[The **Heights Pride Booklet**, complied by Councilman Bill Gaughan, is a very helpful resource guide to municipal services. Copies can be obtained by calling Tom Dolan, the Councilman's aide at **547-4576** or picking it up at his Heights office at the Municipal Building at 325 Palisade Avenue.]

"TRUTH IN RENTING"

To obtain a FREE copy of this guide explaining the rights and responsibilities of residential tenants and landlords, contact Constituent Services at **547-4900**.

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

Tell us what you think about what you just read in this newsletter. Are you satisfied with the quality of life on your block? Send articles, comments or recipes to 232 Ogden Ave.
The next deadline: **Friday, November 26th.**

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ART MUSEUM
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Admission is Free.
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NEWSLETTER STAFF

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HELP US PATROL OUR STREETS!
WE NEED YOU – PLEASE CONTACT US BY PHONE OR MAIL

THE JERSEY CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
NORTH DISTRICT POLICE 282 CENTRAL AVENUE
547-5350 FRONT DESK - 547-5719 NTF OFFICE OR 911

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY/CRIME REPORT

WAS THIS A (CHECK ONE) _____CRIME _____SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY
BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED:
ALCOHOL DRINKING:_____BURGLARIES_____DISORDERLY GROUPS___NARCOTICS ACTIVITY___NOISE___PROSTITUTION_____
WHEN DID IT HAPPEN? DATE:_____TIME:_____

Where Did it Happen?
STREET_____
ADDRESS_____
NEAREST CROSS STREET:_____

SUSPECT DESCRIPTION

__MALE____FEMALE____Age____Height_____Weight_____Race_____
Hair Color_____Mustache, beard_____Glasses____Color of eyes_____
Tatttoos, amputations, scars and/or other distinguishing marks_____
Noticeable accents or special characteristics of speech_____

CLOTHING

Shirt_____Coat_____Trousers_____Shoes_____Tie_____Hat
Rings, Bracelets, Necklaces or Earings:_____

WEAPON

Handgun_____Rifle_____Knife_____Club_____Other_____

DESCRIPTION OF VEHICLE

Make_____Year_____Body Style_____Color_____
License Number_____State____(If unable to identify state, color of license):____
Identifying dents, scratches, wheels, markings

ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL

Name_____

Address_____Phone No._____

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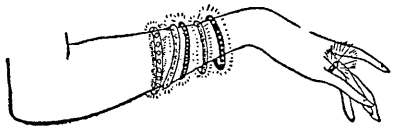

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Get Involved with Your Community
at the Next RNA Meeting on
Tuesday, November 9th at 7:00PM

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

HAPPY
THANKSGIVING
GIVE GENEROUSLY
to the
ANNUAL RNA
FOOD & TOY DRIVE

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FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RNA

Vito Brunetti
Chairperson

Kevin Mahony
Vice-chairperson

Maria Tuzzo
Secretary

Beth D'Errico
Treasurer

Len Davis
Sgt. at Arms

COMING EVENTS

RNA MEETING: Tuesday, Nov. 9th at 7:00 PM
LOCATION: THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

1. **Guest Speaker: Tom DeGise,**
   President of the City Council of Jersey City
2. **Planning for Holiday Activities**
3. **Police NTF Report / NID Update**

Harbor View Holiday Party
Friday, November 19th, 1:30 PM
Volunteers needed.
Baked goods.
Gift Donations.
For information, call Jack: 653-6916.